

Amendments To The Claims

Please replace the claim set on file with the Listing Of The Claims presented below:

Listing Of The Claims

1-200. (Cancelled)

201. (Currently Amended) A functional synthetic siRNA of 18-30 base pairs configured for interacting with a target mRNA of a target gene and silencing the target gene, the siRNA comprising:

- (A) ~~a substantially non-functional~~ sense strand comprising:
- a first nucleotide of the sense strand closest to the 5' end of the sense strand having a 2'-O-alkyl modification; and
 - a second nucleotide of the sense strand next closest to the 5' end of the sense strand having a 2'-O-alkyl modification, wherein ~~the rest of the~~ all sense nucleotides in the sense strand other than the first and second nucleotides ~~each include~~ have a 2'-OH and wherein the sense strand is devoid of a phosphate group at its 5' end; and ~~a functional antisense strand which is at least substantially complementary with the mRNA of the target gene and the sense strand.~~
- (B) an antisense strand which is at least substantially complementary with the mRNA of the target gene and the sense strand, wherein said antisense strand comprises:
- a first nucleotide of the antisense strand closest to the 5' end of the antisense strand having a 2'-O-alkyl modification;
 - a second nucleotide of the antisense strand next closest to the 5' end of the antisense strand having a 2'-O-alkyl modification; and
 - a phosphate group at the 5' end of the antisense strand;
 - wherein all nucleotides in the antisense strand other than the first and second nucleotides have a 2'-OH.

Claims 202. - 212. (Cancelled)

213. (Currently Amended) The siRNA of claim ~~202~~ 201, wherein the antisense strand has at least one phosphorothioate internucleotide linkage.

Claims 214. - 219. (Cancelled)

220. (Currently Amended) The siRNA of claim ~~202~~ 201, further comprising a 3' overhang of 1-5 nucleotides on at least one of the sense or antisense strand.

221. (Previously Presented) The siRNA of claim 220, wherein the 3' overhang has at least one phosphorothioate internucleotide linkage or at least one methylphosphonate internucleotide linkage.

Claims 222. - 223. (Cancelled)

224. (Currently Amended) The siRNA of claim ~~202~~ 201, further comprising at least one conjugate molecule coupled to the sense or antisense strand.

225. (Currently Amended) The siRNA of claim 224, wherein the conjugate molecule is cholesterol.

226. (Currently Amended) The siRNA of claim 225, wherein the conjugate molecule is coupled to the 3' end of the sense ~~or antisense~~ strand.

Claims 227. - 236. (Cancelled)

237 (New). The siRNA of claim 201 wherein at least one of said 2'-O-alkyl modifications is a 2'-O-methyl modification.

238 (New) The siRNA of claim 201 wherein each said 2'-O-alkyl modification is a 2'-O-methyl modification.
